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FM VIENNA

MORI/CDF per C05464539

TO: WHITE HOUSE

S E C R E T 110023Z FEB 73

FM: STANLEY R. RESOR (MBFR DELEGATION - VIENNA 090)
 TO: IMMEDIATE HELMUT SONNENFELDT (WHITE HOUSE)
 GEN. SCOWCROFT (WHITE HOUSE)

1. I WAS PLEASED TO RECEIVE THE TELEGRAM CONTAINING THE NSDM DECISION ON OPTION 3 AND AM GLAD THAT PREPARATIONS FOR TROLATERALS ARE PROCEEDING.

State Dept. review completed

2. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENABLE THE WEST TO PUT FORWARD OPTION 3 TO THE EAST BY THE FIRST WEEK IN APRIL AT THE LATEST.

3. NOW THAT THE USG HAS DECIDED TO USE OPTION 3, IT WOULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE IF, AT THE START OF THE CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE AND VOTING IN MID-MAY ON PROPOSALS FOR REDUCTIONS OF TROOP LEVELS IN EUROPE, SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS WERE NOT IN A POSITION TO USE ARGUMENTS AGAINST SUCH TROOP CUTS BASED ON THE PROSPECTS FOR MBFR AS AUGMENTED BY OPTION 3.

4. IN THE TROLATERALS, THE QUESTION OF TIMING OF THE PRESENTATION OF OPTION 3 TO THE EAST WILL OF COURSE BE A MAJOR ISSUE. WE DESIRE TO KEEP FROM THE SOVIETS ANY IMPRESSION THAT THE US FEELS UNDER CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE TO MOVE IN MBFR. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO GET THE FRG AND UK TO AGREE TO USE OPTION 3 IN TIME, I BELIEVE IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO TELL THEM IN CONFIDENCE THAT, HAVING DECIDED TO USE OPTION 3 FOR OTHER REASONS, WE WOULD LIKE TO BE IN A POSITION BY MID-MAY TO TELL CONGRESS THAT WE HAD INTRODUCED IT AND TO REPORT THE EASTERN RESPONSE. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SHOULD AT THAT TIME BE IN A POSITION TO TELL THE CONGRESS EITHER THAT THERE WERE REASONABLE PROSPECTS OF REACHING AN ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT, OR THAT THE EAST WAS TAKING AN UNREASONABLE POSITION, GIVING GROUND FOR CAUTION ABOUT

OSD Review Completed

***** WHSR COMMENT *****

SCOWCROFT, LL, SONNENFELDT (VIA EAGLEBURGER), LOCAL

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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REAL EASTERN ATTITUDES IN THE FIELD OF MILITARY DETENTE AND ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF UNILATERAL FORCE REDUCTIONS.

5. TO BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE CONGRESS ON THIS BASIS, THE WEST WOULD HAVE TO INTRODUCE OPTION 3 IN EARLY APRIL IN ORDER TO GET A CONSIDERED EASTERN RESPONSE BY THE MIDDLE OF MAY.

6. AN ADMINISTRATION STATEMENT LIMITED TO THE POINT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION CONTEMPLATED PUTTING FORWARD OPTION 3 OR HAD JUST DONE SO WOULD PROBABLY NOT OF ITSELF BE CONSIDERED A STRONG ARGUMENT AGAINST UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS. FOR THAT, WE WOULD NEED A REASONED SOVIET RESPONSE TO OPTION 3, WHETHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE.

7. IN THE TRILATERALS THE UK OR FRG MAY TAKE THE POSITION THAT THE SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY NOT MOVE ON MOFR UNTIL AFTER THE CSCE SUMMIT. I BELIEVE THAT, EVEN IF THIS WERE THE CURRENT SOVIET INCLINATION, IT IS STRONGLY IN THE WESTERN INTEREST TO HAVE ADVANCED OPTION 3 AND TO HAVE RECEIVED A CONSIDERED SOVIET RESPONSE BEFORE CSCE IS CONCLUDED, AND A US-SOVIET SUMMIT TAKES PLACE. THEIR TIMING WOULD OBLIGE THE SOVIETS TO CONSIDER THEIR RESPONSE TO OPTION 3 IN THE LIGHT OF ITS POSSIBLE EFFECT ON CSCE AND ALSO ON A US-SOVIET SUMMIT, WITHOUT ANY NECESSITY FOR THE WEST TO SEEK TO ESTABLISH ANY FORMAL LINKAGE BETWEEN CONCLUDING CSCE AND PROGRESS IN MOFR.

8. ONE POINT TO KEEP IN MIND WITH REGARD TO TIMING IS THAT BOTH THE ALLIES AND THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN PRESSING FOR A SIX-WEEK RECESS, EASTER THROUGH MAY DAY. WE WILL ACT TO CUT BACK THIS PERIOD, BUT IN PRACTICAL TERMS, THERE WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO BE A STRETCH OF THREE WEEKS OR SO IN THE SPRING WHEN THE TALKS ARE NOT IN SESSION. WE WILL SEEK TO DEFER THE BEGINNING OF THE RECESS IN ORDER TO PERMIT INTRODUCTION OF OPTION 3 IN THIS SESSION AND STILL TO GIVE TIME FOR A REASONED EASTERN RESPONSE BY MIDMAY. THE LATEST DATE WHICH APPEARS REASIBLE FOR THE START OF THE RECESS IS APRIL 13.

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